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CATHOLICS PRESS KY ON CIVIL RULE

**Bid Military Yield Power in
Orderly Way in Saigon—
Ask Curb on Buddhists**

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SAIGON, March 29—South Vietnam's powerful Roman Catholic minority asked today that the military regime surrender power in an orderly way.

The Catholics indicated they agreed with Buddhist leaders that South Vietnam needed a civilian government, but they suggested they would oppose capitulation of the ruling generals to Buddhist pressures.

Informed sources said that the responsible and restrained tone of the statement giving the Catholics' views could be partly ascribed to Henry Cabot Lodge, the United States Ambassador.

Priest Moderates Stand

Catholic sources declared that Ambassador Lodge had brought pressure, through the Apostolic delegate to South Vietnam, to persuade the Rev. Hoang Quynh, a refugee priest who dominates the group that issued the statement, not to undermine the position of Premier Nguyen Cab Ky.

Father Quynh, sources close to the priest say, is at least as contemptuous of the generals as any Buddhist leader, but he did moderate his position.

However, the informed sources said that Catholic leaders had warned the Premier that if he did not take vigorous steps against Buddhist-inspired chaos in Central Vietnam they would begin open opposition to him.

Air Vice Marshal Ky, the 35-year-old commander of the South Vietnamese Air Force as well as Premier, was thus put in an even more difficult position than he had been in since political agitation against the military regime began March 10.

A group of student leaders in Hue, 400 miles north of Saigon, sent Premier Ky an ultimatum that if he did not "immediately" meet their demands for a civilian government they would launch violent demonstrations. These student groups are under some degree of control of a Buddhist leader, Thich Tri Quang.

Meanwhile Premier Ky was trying to reach a compromise with a more restrained Buddhist leader, Thich Tam Chau, by which the military Government would arrange elections after a new constitution had been proclaimed, possibly early in 1967.

Premier Ky was therefore in the position of trying to placate at least three pressure groups at once, none of which was in real agreement with the others although all had proclaimed that they were seeking the same goal—civilian government.

About 1.5 million of South Vietnam's 15 million people are Christians, of whom the overwhelming majority are Roman Catholics. The rest of the population is nominally Buddhist, 6 million being practicing members of that faith.

The Premier said at a breakfast meeting of foreign correspondents today that he was "tired" of talking with political groups and of coping with the crisis.

He also said that while he would continue to try to reach a satisfactory agreement with civilian critics, he could, if nec-

essary, use force to end the near anarchy in the Hu-Danang area in Central Vietnam.

Ever since Premier Ky ousted Lieut. Gen. Nguyen Chanh Thi, the former political and military overlord of that area, from power, Hue and Danang have been torn by political demonstrations. Since then the writ of the central Government has not extended to the area in any meaningful way.

The Bureau of Relationships with the Archbishops of the Catholic movement, the group dominated by Father Quynh, today denounced the "disorders" and said the situation "requires stability," possibly because the agitation has been led by Buddhists.

However, the Catholic leaders emphasized that everyone had a right to take part in "orderly struggles" to achieve "righteous" aspirations.

The Catholic group recalled that early in January it had called for democratic institutions to rule South Vietnam. It also recalled that at that time it said:

"South Vietnam's political scene is still a lifeless desert, the Government is still unable to have a solid legal base, unable to secure wide popular support, the population is still in-

different to the people's life and death problems..."

The Catholic statement praised Premier Ky for having "the goodwill" to promise a democratic regime but said, "unfortunately, such promises have not been carried out early enough."

The Catholics said they hoped that appropriate steps would be taken so that the "people do not have to wait longer."

This did not mean what it seemed to mean, informed sources said.

The Catholics, it was stated, did not want to appear to be less vigorous than the Buddhists in demanding democracy, but their real meaning was that Premier Ky should be given a reasonable chance to make good his promises for gradual evolution to elected government.

However, the Premier could displease the Catholics either by delaying national elections or by agreeing to a formula for accelerating them dictated by the Buddhists.